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A NEW SCAPOSE SPECIES OF *ACOURTIA* (ASTERACEAE, MUTISIEAE) FROM BELIZE

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ABSTRACT

A new scapose species of *Acourtia*, **A. belizeana** B.L. Turner, from the Mayan uplift of Belize is described and illustrated. It is closely related to the allopatric taxa *A. nudicaulis* and *A. hondurana*, neither of which is known to occur in Belize.

KEY WORDS: Asteraceae, Mutisieae, *Acourtia*, Belize

Routine identification of Central American and Mexican Asteraceae has revealed the following novelty.

Acourtia belizeana B.L. Turner, *sp. nov.* Figure 1. TYPE: BELIZE. Toledo District: "Lower part of Richardson Creek, affluent of Bladen Branch, lower part of Maya Mountains" (16°33'N, 88°47'W), 100-250 m, seepage area among boulders along stream in cracks of rocks, 2-11 Mar 1987, *Gerrit Davidse & Alan E. Brant 31904* (HOLOTYPE: LL!; Isotypes: MO,US!).

Acourtiae honduranae B.L. Turner similis sed capitulescentia capitula numerosiora (8-20 vs. 3-8) ferentibus in pedunculis divaricatis longioribusque, involucris minoribus (6-7 mm altis vs. 8-10 mm), et acheniis sparsim hispidulis (vs. dense hispidis) setis pappi uniseriatis (vs. biseriatis) paucioribusque (40-50 vs. 80+) differt.

Scapose herbs 35-40 cm high. Scapes slender, glabrous. Leaves all basal, mostly 4-12 cm long, 1.5-2.5 cm wide; petioles 2-5 cm long, pilose with long hairs; blades ovate elliptic to elliptic, not at all lobed, sparsely pubescent, especially along the veins, the margins closely and coarsely serrate, sparsely

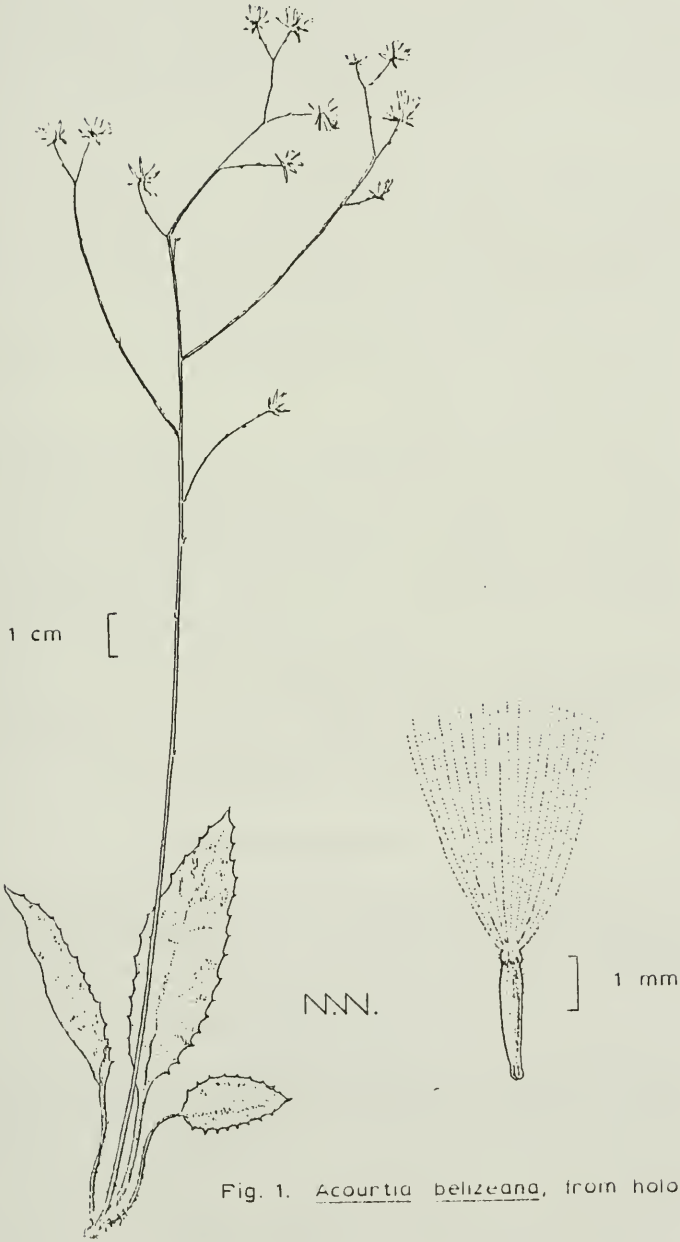

Fig. 1. Acourtia belizeana, from holotype.

pilose. Heads mostly 8-20 in very open paniculate cymes, the ultimate peduncles slender, glabrous, mostly 1-3 cm long. Involucres turbinate, 6-7 mm high, glabrous, the bracts 3-4 seriate, glabrous, the apices mostly obtuse or rounded. Receptacles plane, ca. 1.5 mm across, pubescent, the hairs ca. 0.25 mm long. Florets 8-10 per head, the corollas reportedly white, the tubes glabrous, ca. 2.5 mm long, the ligules 3-4 mm long, trilobed, the inner 2 lobelets 2-3 mm long. Achenes ca. 4 mm long, narrowly fusiform, 5 ribbed, bicolored, sparsely hispidulous, not at all glandular pubescent, the ribs yellowish, the faces purplish; pappus of a single series of ca. 50 tawny persistent bristles 5-6 mm long.

Acourtia belizeana is the only species of *Acourtia* known to occur in Belize. It is closely related to *A. hondurana* B.L. Turner. While both species bear similar narrowly elliptical unlobed leaves, *A. belizeana* has smaller involucres (6-7 mm high vs. 8-10 mm), heads on longer, more divaricate ultimate peduncles (mostly 1-3 cm long vs. 0.5-1.5 cm) and pappus of 40-50 bristles in a single series (vs. ca. 80+ in 2 series).

Cabrera (1993) included this taxon in her concept of *Acourtia hondurana* B.L. Turner, albeit separated out of *Acourtia* along with most other scapose elements as a new genus. I cannot subscribe in this instance to her specific concepts, nor to her newly proposed generic segregate.

Acourtia belizeana might also be compared with the more widespread *A. nudicaulis* (A. Gray) B.L. Turner, (maintained by Cabrera 1993), both having very similar capitulescences, but the latter has larger heads on shorter peduncles, more like those of *A. hondurana*, and its leaves are thinner, mostly larger, and lyrately lobed. In short, *A. belizeana* appears to be a localized endemic of the Mayan uplift in Belize, related to the closely allopatric *A. nudicaulis* and *A. hondurana*, but amply distinct, a repetitive speciation pattern found within *Acourtia* throughout Central America and México.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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